

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. The following remarks are in response to the like-numbered paragraph in the detailed Office Action.

1. Applicant confirms election of Group I and without prejudice cancellation of non-elected method claims.
2. Applicant has cancelled claims 21-29 as non-elected.
3. Corrected drawings are attached hereto.
4. Corrected drawing Figure 4 now includes reference sign to baffles "430" baffles.
5. Paragraph 0054 has been amended to describe the vessel (410) and the weir (412).
6. Figure 2A has not been corrected. Reference numbers 40 and 12 are correctly shown. Sight glass (40) is affixed to the exterior of the vessel (10). Reverse weir (12) is shown in dashed lines as being inside the vessel.
7. The abstract has been amended to correct the first word.
8. The trademark Gas Tec™ has been noted to be a trademark in the specification.
9. Numerous typographical errors have been corrected in the specification. Most of the errors appear to have been introduced by PASAT during the conversion of the specification into a format suitable for electronic filing.
10. Claim 3 has been amended to correct the informality identified by the Examiner.

13. The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 and 8-11 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Moore reference (US 2983537) in view of the Ashbrook reference (US 4722799). With respect, it is submitted that the combination of the Moore reference and the Ashbrook reference does not create a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

An important claimed element in claim 1 is the reverse weir and the fact that one compartment on one side of the weir has a gas inlet, while the other compartment has a gas outlet. As a result, as gas builds up on the gas inlet side, liquid is forced into the compartment gas outlet, until the liquid level drops below the level of the reverse weir. At that time, a slug of gas escapes to the gas outlet side and the process repeats itself as gas is introduced into the vessel.

As the Examiner has recognized, Moore does not teach a vessel as claimed herein. It is submitted that the Ashbrook reference does not teach the vessel as claimed in the within application. With reference to Figure 1, the Ashbrook apparatus depends on a degasified liquid stream entering vessel B. Element 26 is a degassing means for removing entrained gases from entering vessel B. While vessel B does appear to have a reverse weir, shown as item 34, it does not have a gas inlet on one side of the weir, and a gas outlet on the other side of the weir. The only gas outlet is element 28 which is on the same side as the inlet 27, which is not a gas inlet. Therefore vessel B is substantially different in structure from the vessel as claimed in claim 1. The structural difference drives the difference in operation.

In the present invention, gas buildup on the gas inlet side of the reverse weir drives periodic gas slugs under the reverse weir as described above. However, in the Ashbrook reference, the liquid entering vessel B is substantially degassed. The separators 34 serve only to partially obstruct back flow through the vessel. The only gas outlet from the vessel is vent 28, which is on the same side as the inlet. Vent 45 does not provide a gas outlet from vessel B, it is an outlet for gases released by recycling means 40 (column 6, lines 49-51). On the other hand, claim 1 of the within application clearly requires that a gas inlet be provided on one side of the reverse weir, while a gas outlet is provided on the other side.

Therefore, the Ashbrook reference does not teach the elements of the apparatus of claim 1. Accordingly, the combination of Ashbrook and Moore does not teach each and every element of claim 1, as is required to establish a *prima facie* finding of obviousness (MPEP ¶2142). Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 USC 103 is not proper and should be withdrawn.

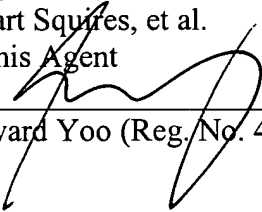
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Please address all correspondence to Customer Number 22828.

Dated March 10, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,
Stuart Squires, et al.
By his Agent



Edward Yoo (Reg. No. 41,435)

ATTACHMENTS:

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Please amend the drawings as follows:

1. Formal drawings are hereby submitted. Figure 4 has been corrected as required by the Examiner.